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IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claims 1-11 as follows:

Sub E 1 1. (Twice amended) A method of using [Use of] a laminate as a barrier material against ethylene oxide gas, the method comprising the steps of:

B 1 forming the laminate having an inner layer comprising a polyolefin, an outer layer comprising a polyester, a polyolefin or a polyamide and an [a] intermediate layer comprising a silicon oxide, and exposing the laminate to ethylene oxide gas.

wherein the laminate is substantially impermeable [in the manufacture of a barrier material] to ethylene oxide gas.

2. (Twice amended) The method [Use] according to claim 1, wherein [in that] the polyolefin is a polypropylene or a polyethylene.

3. (Twice amended) The method [Use] according to claim 1, wherein the polyester for the outer layer of the laminate is polyethylene terephthalate.

4. (Twice amended) The method [Use] according to claim 1, wherein the polyamide is nylon.

Sub E 2 5. (Twice amended) The method [Use] according to claim 1, wherein the silicon oxide-containing intermediate layer is a layer of silicon oxide deposited in-between the facing surfaces of the inner and outer layers.

6. (Twice amended) The method [Use] according claim 1, wherein the intermediate layer is a composite layer comprising the silicon oxide and a polymeric matrix or substrate therefor.



7. (Twice amended) The method [Use] according to claim 6, wherein the matrix or substrate is of a polyester, a polyamide, a polypropylene or a polyvinyl alcohol.

8. (Twice amended) The method [Use] according to claim 7, wherein the polyester for the matrix or substrate is polyethylene terephthalate.

9. (Twice amended) The method [Use] according to claim 7, wherein the polyamide for the matrix or substrate is nylon.

10. (Twice amended) The method [Use] according to claim 1, wherein the laminate has an inner layer of polypropylene, an outer layer of polyethylene terephthalate and an intermediate composite layer of a silicon oxide with polyethylene terephthalate or polyvinyl alcohol.

11. (Twice amended) A container comprising [(6; 106) which is intended to be exposed to ethylene oxide gas wherein the container is formed from] a laminate having an inner layer comprising a polyolefin, an outer layer comprising a polyester, a polyolefin or a polyamide and an intermediate layer comprising a silicon oxide, wherein the container is exposed to ethylene oxide gas and the laminate is substantially impermeable to the ethylene oxide gas.

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Add new claims 27-36 as follows:

27. A method of using a container as a barrier against ethylene oxide, the method comprising the steps of:

forming walls of the container from a laminate having an inner layer comprising a polyolefin, an outer layer comprising a polyester, a polyolefin or a polyamide and an intermediate layer comprising a silicon oxide, and

exposing the container to ethylene oxide gas, and

wherein the container walls are substantially impermeable to ethylene oxide gas.

28. The method according to claim 27, wherein the polyolefin is a polypropylene or a polyethylene.

29. The method according to claim 27, wherein the polyester for the outer layer of the laminate is polyethylene terephthalate.

30. The method according to claim 27, wherein the polyamide is nylon.

31. The method according to claim 27, wherein the silicon oxide-containing intermediate layer is a layer of silicon oxide deposited in-between the facing surfaces of the inner and outer layers.

32. The method according claim 27, wherein the intermediate layer is a composite layer comprising the silicon oxide and a polymeric matrix or substrate therefor.

33. The method according to claim 32, wherein the matrix or substrate is of a polyester, a polyamide, a polypropylene or a polyvinyl alcohol.

34. The method according to claim 33, wherein the polyester for the matrix or substrate is polyethylene terephthalate.